

Mr. Chaplin will call to discuss
this with you.

[Handwritten mark]

E.O.: N/A

Tags: PFOR, RINT, SCPN, AR, US

To: Secstate WashDC Immediate

Subject: AP Story on Ambassador's meeting with President

For AR/ECA - Rondon

Ref: Rondon/Chaplin telcon 9/23/76

1. Embassy received inquiries from most press services in RA about meeting with president. Uniform response was that any comment would have to come from President Videla. Afternoon of 9/22 (subsequent to filing of story) AP called to ask ~~press officer~~ ^{Cohen} if (he) had any comment on statements attributed to "sources close to Amb Hill", and received another no comment response.

2. AP was sufficiently cooperative to provide information on source which made it possible for Embassy to identify him conclusively. There was one source, not several as story implies, and he was Robert Benjamin of _____. Benjamin has long been known to Ambassador ~~XXXX~~ since latter's appointment to Mexico. Benjamin met with Ambassador prior to meeting with Videla. ~~XXXXXX~~ Views and statements attributed to Ambassador by Benjamin are incorrect and self-serving. Ambassador is particularly offended at implication that ~~xxxx~~ human rights issue raised only is sep to Democratic congressmen. Ambassador's position on this issue is on record in Department and was amply discussed in his recent consultation.

3. Benjamin's remarks, if correctly ~~reported~~ ^{reported}, appear to be self-serving in that his firm has public relations contract with GCA, but has told GCA it unwilling to be apologist for human rights violations.

4. Meeting with Videla has been fully reported in other messages. To avoid being drawn into situations/which questions about his meeting with president

Videla might be raised, Ambassador had already cancelled scheduled luncheons with American Chamber and another businessmen's group this week. Ambassador considered and rejected proposal to issue statement that AP report incorrect, in that it inevitably would elicit further question x on which ~~points were~~ ^{was} incorrect, ~~and possible~~ ^{it could} keep this fragile ~~issue~~ ^{issue} in the air an additional day. In the event that circumstances further require Department to respond to questions about the story, Ambassador is ~~entirely~~ fully prepared to stand on his record on this issue, ~~being~~ ~~only that any Departmental statements about this position would minimize~~ ~~damage to the~~ ~~Department's~~

HQ25

ARGENTINA END HL HQ16 90
BY ALFONSO CARREY
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, SEPT 22 (AP)--PRESIDENT FORD
SUPPORTS THE ARGENTINE MILITARY GOVERNMENT BUT WOULD LIKE
TO SEE IT IMPROVE ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, SOURCES CLOSE TO
U.S. AMBASSADOR ROBERT HILL SAID WEDNESDAY.
NEARBY, FIVE LEFTIST GUERRILLA SUSPECTS WERE KILLED
BY SECURITY FORCES IN CLASHES NEAR BUENOS AIRES, RAISING
TO 904 THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL DEATHS THIS YEAR, SECURITY
SOURCES SAID. THEY SAID A POLICEMAN AND A WOMAN TERRORIST
SUSPECT WERE WOUNDED IN THE ACTION.
HUMAN RIGHTS DOMINATED A ONE-HOUR HEATING BETWEEN HILL
AND GEN. JOSE VIDELA, THE ARGENTINE MILITARY PRESIDENT,
ON TUESDAY AT THE GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THE SOURCES SAID. NEITHER
THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE NOR THE U.S. EMBASSY SAID WHAT WAS
DISCUSSED.

(THE: 540 GRAP)
DAILY SEPT 22.

AHS 13:14 EDT SEPT 22.

CONF TO BE SENT if HQ2 is prod.
will not defend HQ2

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ARGENTINA BL THREE TAKES TOTAL 433

BY ALFONSO CHANDY

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

Buenos Aires, Argentina, Sept 22 (AP)--

PRESIDENT FORD SUPPORTS THE ARGENTINE MILITARY GOVERNMENT BUT WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT IMPROVE ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, SOURCES CLOSE TO U.S. AMBASSADOR ROBERT HILL SAID WEDNESDAY.

THEY SAID THIS IS WHAT HILL TOLD GEN. JORGE VIDELA, THE ARGENTINE MILITARY PRESIDENT, DURING A ONE-HOUR MEETING AT THE GOVERNMENT HOUSE ON TUESDAY. NEITHER THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE NOR THE U.S. EMBASSY SAID WHAT WAS DISCUSSED.

THE SOURCES SAID THAT HILL TOLD VIDELA THAT THE FORD ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTS MILITARY LEADERS BUT THAT SOME DEMOCRAT CONGRESSMEN HAVE BEEN PUTTING PRESSURE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT CHARGES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS HERE.

THEY SAID THE PRESSURE INCREASED AFTER LAST MONTH'S ARREST AND SUBSEQUENT DEPORTATION OF A U.S. ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST AND LAST WEEK'S ARMED ABDUCTION OF AN AMERICAN NEWSPAPER WOMAN.

THE SOURCES DID NOT SAY WHAT VIDELA TOLD HILL. A U.S. EMBASSY SPOKESMAN DECLINED COMMENT AND DESCRIBED THE MEETING AS NOTHING UNUSUAL.

IN WASHINGTON, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE, HEADED BY REP. DONALD FRAMER, D-MICH., HAS SCHEDULED HEARINGS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINA BEGINNING NEXT WEDNESDAY.

(MORE)

AND 10:50 PM, SEPT 22

WS175

BUENOS AIRES ARGENTINE NL WS16 ADD: WEDNESDAY.

THE HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL, A WASHINGTON-BASED GROUP OF LIBERALS INCLUDING SOME SUPPORTERS OF DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JIMMY CARTER, HAS URGED CONGRESS TO CUT OFF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO ARGENTINA.

LAST FRIDAY THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON, ARNALDO BUSICH, RESIGNED AND DIPLOMATIC SOURCES SAID THE REASON WAS HE COULD NO LONGER STAND PRESSURES FROM LIBERAL U.S. GROUPS OVER HUMAN RIGHTS.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS CHARGES STEM FROM LIBERALS AND LEFTISTS WHO SAY RIGHT-WING TERRORISTS IN ARGENTINA, BLAMED FOR HUNDREDS OF ABDUCTIONS AND MURDERS THIS YEAR, ARE REALLY MILITARY OR POLICE OFFICERS CONDUCTING A REPRISAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST LEFTIST OVER LEFT-WING GUERRILLA ATTACKS. THE GOVERNMENT DENIES IT.

IN THE LATEST ACTION, THE ARGENTINE ACTORS GUILD SAID FOUR ACTORS, ALL LITTLE KNOWN, HAVE DISAPPEARED FROM THEIR HOMES AND MAY HAVE BEEN KIDNAPED. NEWS CIRCLES ALSO SAID THAT FOUR JOURNALISTS, INCLUDING TWO EDITORS, HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN THE PROVINCE.

THE FAMILY OF THE KIDNAPED AMERICAN WOMAN, PATRICIA ERB, 19, OF JACKSON, MISS., SAID THEY STILL HAD NO HEAR OF HER, 15 DAYS AFTER SHE WAS TAKEN FROM HER FAMILY HOME IN BUENOS AIRES BY ARMED MEN WHO HER FATHER DESCRIBED AS POLICEMEN. HER FATHER, JOHN D. ERB, A GERMAN-AMERICAN PASTOR FROM NEUSTON, KAN., HAS BEEN IN ARGENTINA FOR THE LAST 25 YEARS. (MORE).

ANS 12:55 EST SEPT 22.

W913

BUENOS AIRES ARGENTINE NL 0017 : YEARS.

HIS FATHER HAS SAID THE WAS APPARENTLY INVOLVED WITH LEFTIST GROUPS AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS AIRES, WHICH MAY HAVE HAD LINKS TO MARXIST GUERRILLAS. THE PRIEST WHO WAS ARRESTED AND DEPORTED, THE REV. JAMES MARTIN DEERY OF THE LASALLE MONASTERY IN HARTFORD, CONN. WAS ACCUSED OF BEING A SUBVERSIVE. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FILED A FORMAL PROTEST WITH THE MILITARY REGIME BECAUSE DEERY WAS HELD INCOMMUNICADO.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, SHORTLY AFTER THE MILITARY OVERTHREW AND ARRESTED PRESIDENT ISABEL PERON IN A BLOODLESS COUP LAST MARCH 24, TWO WEST GERMANS DISAPPEARED AND HAVE NOT BEEN HEARD FROM. WEST GERMAN SOURCES HERE SAY THEY MAY HAVE BEEN KIDNAPED AND KILLED BY RIGHTISTS.

LOCAL FINANCIAL CIRCLES FEAR THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS CHARGES COULD AFFECT INTERNATIONAL LOANS TO THIS COUNTRY. HOWEVER THE WORLD BANK GRANTED A \$125-MILLION CREDIT TO ARGENTINA FOR ELECTRICAL PROJECTS ON TUESDAY, THE GOVERNMENT SAID. END (CHADY).

AMS 12:45 EDT SEPT 22.

END

BUENOS AIRES ARGENTINE NL 1018 ADD: SAID.
IN CORDOBA, ARGENTINA'S SECOND LARGEST CITY AND INDUSTRIAL
CENTER 450 MILES TO THE NORTHWEST, TROOPS PEACEFULLY SEIZED
A TRUCK PLANT OF THE ITALIAN-OWNED FIAT AUTOMOBILE AND ARRESTED
FOUR MEN DESCRIBED AS LEFTIST ACTIVISTS, THE ARMY SAID.
IT SAID ONE OF THE MEN WAS PICKED UP WHILE PASSING OUT
LEAFLETS OF THE LEFT-WING PERONIST MONTONERO GUERRILLAS AND
THE OTHER THREE WERE DETAINED WHEN TRYING TO START A STRIKE.
(END, CHADY).

HAS17:19EST 59-22-76

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TELEGRAM

INDICATE
☐ COLLECT
☐ CHARGE TOE.O. 11652:
TAGS:
SUBJECT:

ACTION:

FROM
Ambassy BUENOS AIRESCLASSIFICATION
~~SECRET~~GDS
PFOR, SHUM, AR, US
My Call on President Videla

Secstate WASHDC IMMEDIATE

~~SECRET~~ BUENOS AIRES 00776 6177AMB
DCM
POL-3
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DAO
POL/R
CERON

1. I called on President Videla at Casa Rosada this morning at 11:15 and spent almost 1 1/2 hours with him. A report on our discussion of US-Argentine relations--especially with respect to human rights issue--will follow by septel. Points of immediate interest were as follows:
2. President Videla apologized and said he was not yet in a position to give me the name of the new Ambassador to the United States. He did say, however, that it would not be General Miro as several radio and press reports here indicated this morning. He said he hoped to have the name soon and would inform the Embassy as soon as possible (note: Mrs. Masich called my wife this morning before following her husband to Washington. She expressed sorrow upon cutting short their assignment, and said her only regret was that she and her husband had not been able to complete his mission).

DRAFTED BY:

POL:MSMITH:CC 185

DRAFTING DATE

9/21/76

TEL. EXT.

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3. Gwenda Mae Loken Case. I discussed the Loken case with President Videla, pointing out to him the extremely difficult conditions under which she is being held and the fact that she is pregnant. The President responded that Interior Minister has given instructions for the judicial process to be terminated quickly, i.e. for there to be a speedy trial and sentencing. When that is done, he assured me, she will be expelled from the country immediately under order of executive decree.

4. Patricia Erb Case. I also pressed the President for any news concerning Patricia Erb. The President said that GOA has not been able to find any trace of her and has no idea where she is. He promised, however, to stay in contact and to notify me immediately of any new developments in the case. He indicated that when she is found (if she is found) GOA will expel her from the country (and he implied that it would do so before any judicial process might be initiated).


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